

Military and political situation in south Caucasus in nineteenth century and Russian occupation of Erivan khanate

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Abstract

Iravan region throughout history has been in the composition of the Azerbaijan Government. Prosperity of Iravan city as a center takes the periods of Chukhursad higher Khanate and Iravan khanate. Beginning from XV century, starting from the junction place of Arpa river with Araz valley territory between mountains Aghridagh and Alagoz, which was known as Sadi and was used as Chukhursad. During the period of Azerbaijan Safavid Empire, at the beginning of the XVI century in this region was founded higher Khanate Chukhursad with Central city Iravan. The name of higher Khanate Chukhursad, which covered a large portion of West Azerbaijan, may be considered the first general geographical name of this territory. During the Ottoman-Safevids War in 1578-1590 Chukhursad higher Khanate was occupied by Ottoman troops in 1585 and on this occasion the monument named "Revan Koshku" was raised on the territory of the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul.

Keywords: Azerbaijan history, Erivan city, Khanate historical system, historical Azerbaijan territory.

At the beginning of the XVIII century the Safavid Empire has undergone severe economic, political and military crisis, what resulted with occupation of the Caspian region by Peter the Great, the Russian emperor and corresponding to this the troops of the Ottoman Empire entered the region, the events came to the end with the signing of the agreement between the parties in 1724 in

Istanbul. According to the contract, outside the Caspian regions, most part of the territory of Azerbaijan, including Iravan region were given to the Ottoman State.[5]The Ottoman Government, as in the case of the year 1590, arranged the detailed book of Iravan region in 1728 as well. This time, the Ottoman Government compiled additional detailed ledger for Nakhchivan region,

Zar, Zabil and Sharur regions were excluded from the composition of Nakhchivan and joined to Iravan province. In addition, along with merging the regions Maku, Ighdir, Surmali to Iravan province the regions Goycha, Mezre, Khinzirak, Girxbulag, Derechichak and Sadarak region 100 percent of the population of which were Turks and region Shuragal were created, at the end of the XVI century the provinces Talin, Armavi, Abnik, Sharabkhana were given to the newly created regions.[6]

According to the detailed ledger of Iravan province dated 1728 Iravan city and the regions Girxbulag, Karbi, Maku, Khinzirak, Karni, Vedi, Derechichak, Abaran, Goycha, Mazra, Surmali, Ighdir, Aralik, Sharur, Sadarak, Zarzamin and liva Shuragal were the constituent parts of the above mentioned province.[7]

Nadir shah who restored the previous power of the Safavids State defeated Ottoman Empire and in 1735 returned the province Iravan to Safavids. The next period in the territory Iravan province as other Azerbaijan territories were included into the territory of the Nadir Shah's Empire (1736-1747). Nadir Shah's administrative land policy attracts the great interest as well. So that Shirvan, Garabagh, Azerbaijan and Chukhursad higher Khanates existing in the period of Safavids were canceled and on this territory of the joined Azerbaijan province with the centre in Tabriz was created. This step was not random, it was approval of the fact that like other higher Khanates Chukhursad is Azerbaijani land as well.[8]

After Nadir Shah was killed in 1747 the Empire he created was separated

into small States-Khanates. This time on Azerbaijan territory 20 khanates were created. One of these was the Khanate of Iravan. If on the one hand, the creation of Iravan Khanate was the occurrence of Nadir Shah's sui-side, on the other hand it was a result of the historical development the West Azerbaijan. As mentioned earlier, Western Azerbaijan had been included in these or other States' territories, but there was not created an additional state. Iravan Khanate was the first such State.[9]

Iravan Khanate which was created on the historic territory of Azerbaijan covered the territory on both sides of the River Araz which flows between the mountains Aghri and Alagoz. The Goycha lake basin of the mountain Aghri is the central territory of the Iravan Khanate. Iravan Khanate borders with Pembek province, Shamshadil and Gazakh sultanates and Ganja Khanate from the North, with Garabagh and Nakhchivan Khanates from the East, with Khoy and Maku khanates from the South, with the Ottoman Empire from South-West and West. 23.8 min kv. Iravan khanate which covered the territory of more than 23.8 thousand square km. consisted of 15 districts: 1) Girkhbulag; 2) Zengibasar; 3) Garnibasar; 4) Vedibasar; 5) Sharur; 6) Shuran; 7) Darakand; 8) Saatli; 9) Talin; 10) Sayidli-Akhsakhli; 11) Sardarabad; 12) Carpi; 13) Abaran; 14) Darachichek; 15) Goycha.[10]

Iravan khanate was an independent khanate beginning from 1747, the year it was founded till 1797, but during 1797-1828 years its existence continued under the domination of supreme power of Iran, but it could protect the interior independence and certain independence

in foreign policy. During this period the following khans managed Iravan khanate: Mahdi Khan Gasimli (1747-1748), Muhammad Huseyn Khan Garayli (1748-1751), Khalil Khan Ozbek (1751-1755), and Hasanli Khan Gajar (1755-1759), Huseynli Khan Gajar (1759 / 60-1783 November), Gulamali Khan Gajar (1783-1784 summer), Muhammed Huseyn Khan Gajar (1784-1805 June), Aligulu Khan Gajar (1797 June), Hasan Khan Makulu (1797 summer), Mehdigulu Khan Gajar (1805 spring-1806 August), Ahmad Khan Maraghali (August-October 1806), Huseyngulu Khan Gajar (December 1806-October 1827).[11]

In the second half of the XVIII century, as other khanates of Azerbaijan, the political history of Iravan khanate was closely related to internal feudal clashes, bloody coup d'etat inside the palace and struggle against foreign invaders.[12] Despite the fighting, the process of unification of Azerbaijani khanates around a single flag during the second half of the XVIII century had failed. This means that to the end of the century there favorable conditions has created for foreign military intervention towards Azerbaijan khanates and their occupation.

At the end of the XVIII century especially Iran and the Russian states and partly the Ottoman Empire became more active in the South Caucasus for realizing expansion plans towards Azerbaijan. Iran tried to occupy these lands and reinstate the bounds of Nadir Shah's Empire. Russia in its turn continued the policy of occupying the South Caucasus which took the beginning from the Peter the first's period. But both during Peter the first's (1682-1725) and Yekatherin

the second's (1762-1796) reign period the Russian troops tried to invade South Caucasus but all their attempts were unsuccessful.

Azerbaijani khanates that make up the vast majority of countries of the South Caucasus territory had great importance from the political and military-strategic point of view for Russia. Firstly, the occupation of the land could serve for solution of the traditional Russian-Turkish rivalry on the benefit of Russia. Secondly, Russia has not yet completed conquest of the Central Caucasus. So the invasion of the South Caucasus could create an appropriate opportunity for encircling the land of mountaineers from North and South. Finally, the Russian-British rivalry would increase the importance of the South Caucasus, including Azerbaijan. The occupation of this place by Russia could be a major blow to the monopoly of the Ost-Indian company and diminish the influence of Great Britain.[13] Accordingly, in 1801, Alexander the II (1801-1825) sitting on the throne of Emperor of Russia turned whole his attention to the occupation of the South Caucasus. Sparseness and complicated military-political condition dominating in the South Caucasus during the mentioned period simplified the process of occupation for Russia. Benefiting from the such situation tsar Alexander the II in 1801, September 12 annexed the territory of Kartli-Kakheti to Russia.[14] Then the supreme commander of the Russian troops in the Caucasus K.F. Knorring (1801-1802) in 1802, December 26 invited the representatives of Guba and Talish khanates, shamkhal of Tarki, usmi of Garagaytag, judge of Tabasaran and

other judges of Dagestan to Georgiyevsk for signing the contract about taking them under "protection" of Russia.[15]

With the annexation of the eastern Georgia by Russia the regions Gazakh, Shamsadil, Borchali and Pambak which were dependent of the kingdom Kartli-Kakheti of Azerbaijan now were under the control of Russia. Iravan khanate seen Pembek as the land of its own and therefore it should be battle with Russia for returning of Pambak, but it lost.[16] Thus, with the Khanate of Yerevan began towards the end of 1801 the military conflicts between Iravan khanate and Russian troops started.

The occupation of the Iravan khanate ensuring the security in the annexed Eastern Georgia, at the same time carrying significant strategic importance in the fight against Iran and the Ottoman Empire, locating on the border with the Ottoman Empire was of great importance for Russia.

Therefore Aleksandar the First sent a list of instructions task dated on April 24, 1802 where he ordered Knorring to gain the dependence of Iravan khanate from Russia "for ensuring Georgia's security" and to occupy Ganja khanate.[17] Before the instructions task being sent Knorring attempts to seize the Iravan khanate and for this purpose, in 1802, April 2 sent a letter to the khan of Iravan Muhammad khan where offers to accept the Russian dependence.[18] Muhammad khan who was involved into the internal fight between Ottoman leaders tried to gain more time in relations with Russia, maneuvering among Russia, Iran and Ottoman states through political game and in this way he was trying to protect its independence.

At the end of the XVIII- and beginning of the XIX centuries the French Revolution (1789-1794) had demonstrated decisive influence on international relations. Expansion of the occupation process of Europe by France and withdrawal of Napoleon Bonaparte's troops from Egypt in 1798, July 2 caused to the warming of relations between the Ottoman Empire and Russia and in December 23, 1798 between the two countries alliance agreement consisting of 14 articles (in addition 13 private and one additional item) was attached.[19] Knorring who tried to benefit from this alliance against Iravan khanate on one hand organized the joint attacks of Russian troops and Kars state against Iravan Khanate[20], on the other hand sending letter to Muhammad khan he proposed to adopt the Russian dependence.[21]

During this period, the figures of the Armenian Church were struggling for the sake of guiding the Echmiadzin Catholicosate, Muhammed Khan who was approved as the head of the Armenian Catholicosate by decree of the Russian emperor and who confirmed to the post another Armenian pastor by name David whom he believed, caused the wrath of the Russians and Knorring tried to take advantage of this situation for military intervention into Iravan khanate.[22]

In 1802 the task instead of Knorring, the commander in chief of the Russian army in the Caucasus was appointed Pavel Dmitrievich Sisianov (1802-1806). Thus, compared soft policy of Knorring to Azerbaijani khanates was substituted by strict reactionary and the open aggressive policy of Sisianov. Sisianov began an open violation ac-

tions and war of Russia to Azerbaijan khanates. In 1803, March 29 Jar-Balakan, in 1804, January 4 Ganja was occupied by Russian troops.

After the occupation of Ganja Sisianov directed full attention to the occupation of the Iravan khanate. 6 months of correspondence between Sisianov and Muhammed khan concerning the dependence of the Iravan khanate from Russia and recognizing Danili as Armenian capital did not produce the desired results.[23] Sisianov had written in the report sent to the emperor Aleksandr the first: "Mohammad Khan refuses from carrying out high instructions of His Majesty in recognition Danili as Armenian capital. His impunity undermines the authority of the emperor Majesty in areas which were obtained by the force of gun. Therefore, I must go to Iravan khanate to punish Muhammad Khan and to declare Danila Armenian capital and to place garrison there. The local Armenian merchants promise to provide us with food..."[24] The same time, Sisianov communicated to the attention of the emperor in his report that he needed additionally 4 regiments and 100 silver rubles for successful completion the walk to Iravan, and then he noted that with these forces the territories of Iravan, Nakhchivan, Garabagh will be occupied and the overall length of the occupation campaign in Kur-Araz would come to the end.[25] In May of 1804 Sisianov signed orders about the attack on the Iravan Khanate. In May 29 the Russian troops under the leadership of general-major Tuchko began to move toward the Iravan fortress. Later on remaining regiments headed by Sisianov moved the same direction. The number

of Russian troops moving to Iravan direction consisted of 4370 soldiers and officers.[26]

In summer of 1804 Iran was preparing for the war against Russia which was busy with invasion of the South Caucasus. Sisianov had enough information about it. So he was trying to forestall Iran and to capture Iravan before the Iranian troops enter the South Caucasus. At the same time, the independent actions of Muhammed khan who was formally dependent of the Iranian ruler Fatali shah dissatisfied the Tehran government and so Fatali shah tried to remove Mohammad Khan from power. Now the movement of both Russia and Iran towards Iravan khanate made Mohammad Khan to behave extremely cautious, to be careful and to take measures by political maneuvering. Mohammed khan who was extremely uncomfortable because of the fate of Ganja khan Javad khan tried to normalize the relations with Russia diplomatically, but no result was achieved. Mohammad Khan decided to resist and took serious measures to strengthen the fortress of Iravan. The number of defenders of the tower has reached to 7 thousand and the food supply was stocked up.

In early June, 1804 the group under the command of Tuchko consisting of 1 regiment and 2 battalion accompanied by the 8 balls occupied the province Shorayel of the Iravan khanate.[27]

In 1804, June 10 diplomatic relations between Iran and Russia were broken and a few days after the war began between the two countries. A part of Iranian troops headed by successor to the throne Abbas Mirza moved in Iravan direction. Mohammad Khan who took

into account the seriousness of the situation had asked for help from Iran head commander. By order of Shah, Nakhchivan and Eravan fortresses should be seriously defended and the movement of Russian troops should be stopped.[28] But the Russian army has gained the upper hand in first battles between Russia and Iran in Echmiadzin and Gamarli. Russian troops besieged Eravan on July 2. Fatali shah came here on hearing the bad luck of Abbas Mirza. Double siege occurred around Eravan: Russians besieged Eravan and Iranian troops besieged Russian troops from behind. All input and output sides of the road were closed for the last.[29] Sisianov's troop faced with severe food shortage had fallen into insurmountable situation and gave the losses.[30] Losses of the Russian army in military conflict with Iran were great.[31] On July 15 the 8-hours attack of Russian troops to take the Eravan fortress was defeated. The Russian troop having more than 300 casualties was obliged to stop the fight. Though Russian troops could dislodge Mirza Abbas' troops to the opposite side of Araz river but they couldn't take Eravan. The applies of Sisianov about capitulating sent to Muhammad khan did not give any results.

Inspired by the march of the Iranian troops the regions Shamsadil, Qazakh, Borchaly, Jar and other areas had rebelled against the Russian occupation. In such situation the Russian army met with serious resistance in Eravan faced with lack of food, weapon and forage. Taking into consideration all these the military council gathered by Sisianov on 31st of August got the decision to abandon the siege of Eravan. On 1st of

September Sisianov made the last apply to Muhammad khan to surrender the Eravan fortress but he was rejected. After this on 3rd of September Sisianov gave orders to stop the blockade and to withdraw Russian troops from surrounding areas of Eravan.[32] Thus, Russian army which lost more than two thousand militaries left Eravan defeated.[33]

Though they give up the siege of Eravan fortress, the occupation the Eravan khanate having strategic importance remained as the main purpose of the Russian military authorities. Therefore, the occupation of the Eravan khanate part by part was highlighted. In late March, 1805, Shorayel sultanate dependent of Eravan khanate and which had strategic and economic importance was completely occupied by Russian troops.[34]

Returning failed from Eravan march Sisianov first of all took the measure in order to put down the raised revolts against Russian occupants in order to maintain certain war with Abbas Mirza. Later he strengthened the military-political pressure on Azerbaijan khans. As a result of pressure on 14th of May, 1805 khans of Sheki and Garabagh were obliged to sign the Kurakchay contract and accept the patronage of Russia. Subsequently, on 25th of December Shamakhi Khanate was subordinated.[35]

In early 1806 Sisianov decided to renew attacks towards Eravan. But on 8th of February, 1806 Sisianov was killed during the Baku processes and realization of this invasion plan was prevented. In June, 1806 general-feldmarshal I.V. Gudovich was appointed as supreme commander of Caucasus instead of

Sisianov and he was instructed by Russian Empire to occupy and subordinate Azerbaijani khanates completely.[36] In 1806 Guba, Baku and Darbant khanates were occupied by Russia.[37]

On being aware of occupying intentions of Russia in summer of 1805 Abbas Mirza removed Mohammed Hussein Khan Gacar, who was not stable in his foreign policy, from his post in Iravan khanate and brought to power Mehdigulu khan Gacar (spring, 1805-August, 1806).[38]

Although during the guidance of Abbas Mirza Iranian army was on the territory of Azerbaijan he could not prevent the occupation process of Azerbaijan people by Russian troops. Iranian army couldn't benefit from the favorable strategic situation during the first battles of the Russia-Iran war (1804-1813). As the result of this Russian army maintained the situation and had kept the superiority till the end of the war. The Ottoman state did not help to the resistance movement against the Russian occupation going in Azerbaijan in 1798 and 1805 as remained loyal to the alliance agreement signed with Russia. In some cases, for example, the pasha of Kars helped to Russia in company pursued against Iravan khanate in 1802.[39] After all, as the result of the military company pursued till the end of 1806 Russia essentially finished the process of invading Northern Azerbaijan khanates.

France who lived up in Iran and the Ottoman governments supported these states in the war against Russia in 1806, helped to improve the army of these states. The khan of Iravan Huseyngulu Khan (1806-1827) used sufficiently assistance of the French experts in

strengthening of Iravan fortress in the framework of European military rules.[40] The UK began to fulfill this mission of France in Iran after signing the Tilzit peace contract (1807).

In November 1806 the Russian-Ottoman War (1806-1812) began. On beginning the Russian-Ottoman war in the Caucasus and Balkan fronts Russia government who had been running the war with Iran in the first period tried to sign peace with Iran and get all the attention turned to the Ottoman front. The captain Stepanov aimed with this mission was sent to Tehran for talks about reconciliation. As Gudovich demanded to extend the border line between Russia and Iran along Araz and Kura rivers till Arpachay river, along with this to join Iravan and Nakhchivan khanates to Russian territory those talks gave no result. It was also the influence of the activities of French diplomacy in Iran in the said period.[41]

As the talks failed the Russian troops began a new attack on Iravan and Nakhchivan khanates in September 1808. On September 25, 1808 Gudovich together with 240 officers and 7506 troops began a military march towards the Iravan and Nakhchivan khanates.[42] In late September Huseyngulu khan who was failed in the war with Russia was withdrawn back on October 3 and Iravan fortress was besieged by Gudovich.[43] On October 9 general-major Nebolshin, who got the order to occupy Nakhchivan headed 78 officers and 3062 soldiers from Garabagh in the direction of Nakhchivan.[44] To organize the defense of Nakhchivan was not possible, Kalbali khan who had great reputation among the people was deprived of his post and was taken to Iran

together with his family in the summer of 1808. His son Sheykhalı bay together with his close people escaped from Garabagh joined to Russian army and guided to Nebolsin what played an important role in collapse of Nakhchivan.[45] In 1808, October 28 in the war happened in a place called Garababaneer Nakhchivan the Russians defeated Abbas Mirza's army. Overall on 1st of November, 1808 Nakhchivan was captured by the Russians.[46]

Huseyngulu khan's brother Hasan khan headed the defense of the Iravan fortress. Hasan Khan rejected to Gudovich's persistent apply to submit the castle.[47] Hasan Khan gave the following answer to the request of Gudovich to the surrender of the fortress: "... you ask me to surrender Iravan fortress voluntarily, and you will give me the Iravan khanate in return. If such ambitions is good, then you also serve the Iranian ruler and take the control over Iravan, Tabriz and other khanates".[48]

The unexpected coming of winter had dropped Russian troops into a difficult situation as the dangers of food, feed and weapons lack could cut their relation with Tbilisi. That's why Gudovich directed all the attention on attack of Iravan fortress.

Russian troops conducted the next large-scale attack on Iravan fortress in November 17, 1808, but had faced the serious resistance. Giving serious losses on Noyabr 30 Russian troops should leave Iravan defeated. The historian of Russian war N.F. Dubrovin writes that, the Russians troops as a result of attacks to Iravan fell into such a situation that could not even thinking about the attack

back to the castle.[49] According to the report of Gudovich sent to the Russian Emperor 17 officers and 269 soldiers were killed in this war, while 64 officers and 829 soldiers were wounded.[50] The head of the Russian invading troops Nebolshin understood that they are unable to stay in the region and was obliged to leave Nakhchivan.[51] As a result of cold weather conditions and heavy snow Russian troops lost more than a thousand soldiers and returned to Garabagh.[52] That was the second shameful defeat in Iravan khanate of Russian troops after the match in 1804. Also should be mentioned that both in 1804 and in 1808 Armenians provided the Russian troops with fodder and other important required tools and fought parallel with them against Iravan khanate.

After the defeat in Iravan general Gudovich was recalled from the post of head of the Russian army in the Caucasus and general Tormosov was appointed instead.[53] Tormosov tried to streamline relations with Iran through negotiations. At the same time Iranian shah also proposed to begin negotiations.[54] At the negotiations held between the parties in April, 1810 Russian side demanded Nakhchivan and Iravan khanates and Iran demanded Talysh khanate. Russian wanted to reuse of the methods they use to Crimea here once and suggested Talysh khanate to be an independent territory. However, these negotiations ended fruitless.

Tormosov also attached great importance to the occupation of Iravan khanate as its predecessor and thought that the occupation of the khanate would force Iran to react. But Huseyngulu Khan's military and diplo-

matic skills did not allow the realization of the Tormosov's plans.

During this period, England along with the military-financial assistance to Tehran government in the war against Russian troops tried to gain joint action of Iran and Ottoman government against Russia in the Caucasus.[55] Abbas Mirza who needed the help of Ottoman state for withdrawing the Russian troops from the South Caucasus in 1810 proposed an alliance to Istanbul government and the first agreement has been gained. By the direct insistence of Britain, the Ottoman Empire and Iran signed an alliance agreement against Russia. According to the agreement, after then Iran and the Ottoman army had to participate in the war against along with Britain on the basis of the plan England had prepared. In accordance with this plan, in August–September of 1810 the Ottoman and the Persian armies and the troops of Huseynqulu khan marched together and tried to strike against Russia. But this plan failed as Russia began large-scale counterattack from Kutaisi, Surami and Chalki.[56] In the summer of 1811, commands planned joint offensive campaign of Iran and the Ottoman commanders against Russia in the South Caucasus remained unenforced.[57] In general, Russian side completely dominated both in Russia-Iran and in Russia-Ottoman borders.

On hearing treat of Napoleon's attack Peterburg authority two months before the attack, signed peace treaty between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in Bucharest on May 16(28), 1812.[58] According to the Bucharest peace, nevertheless the Ottoman Empire could retrieve castles occupied by Rus-

sian troops in the Caucasus but it was obliged to recognize the fact of occupation of the South Caucasus by Russia.

At the same time, signing of the Bucharest peace Russia gained the opportunity to direct the troops from the Russian-Turkish front against Iran. So, Iran tried to make peace with Russia and made some concessions. But the proposals of Russia to prolong the demarcation line between Iran and Russia along the rivers Kura, Araz and Arpachay were not accepted by Abbas Mirza. However, the military campaign held by Abbas Mirza in 1912 resulted in the complete failure and Iran was shipped to begin talks again.

After Russia won French-Russian war in 1812 England realized that Russian forces headed south Iran may completely fall apart and might be dangerous to the interests of England in the East. Accordingly, England for preventing the stroke of Russia inside towards the south Iran forced Iran to peace and mediated to negotiations between Russia and Iran. Russia needed peace in order to recover the scattered economy as a result of Napoleon's expedition and the newly appointed head commander of the Caucasus general N.F. Rtishchev to (1812-1816) was given instructions to accelerate peace with Iran. Russian-Iran talks held by the mediation of Britain resulted in the signing of the Gulistan agreement on October 12 in 1813. According to the agreement of Gulistan, Iran was obliged to agree with occupation of Russia in the Caucasus and confirmed that Ganja, Garabakh, Sheki, Shirvan, Guba, Baku and Talysh khanates, Eastern Georgia and Dagestan thereafter belongs to Russia.[59] Iravan and Nakhchivan khanates remained

within Iran territory. Thus, at the beginning of the XIX century the first phase of the war between Russia and Iran waged for the sake of Azerbaijan lands had came to the end.

After signing the agreement of Gulistan the Iran-Russia relations remained tense. Iran couldn't accept the failure, while Russia tried to occupy new territories, especially to seize Iravan khanate. Russian Emperor Aleksander the First wrote to the supreme commander of the Russian army in the Caucasus A.P. Yermolov (1816-1827): "It would be nice, if the Shah of Iran will exchange Iravan and Nakhchivan withlands to the south of Araz (Talysh khanate – I.K.) which we have occupied. However, taking into account stubbornness of Iran incompromising these lands to Russia, we can't hope that they would give their approval." [60]

In the period between two Russia-Iran wars (1813-1826) diplomatic attempts to resolve the contentious issues between Russia and Iran failed. This is more concerned with strengthening of Russia's position in the international arena and imperial interests.

In 1826, July 16 Persian army under the command of Abbas Mirza, crossed the border and began march on the North Azerbaijan. Iravan khan Huseyngulu khan's troops began the attack towards positions of Russian troops in Lori and Shamsadil. So, the II Russia-Iran War (1826-1828) began.

The initial period of the war was disastrous for Russia. Iranian soldiers could move uponly till Ganja and Shamkir. To the end of August, Yermolov was able to recruit scattered troops in the South Caucasus. In Sep-

tember 1826, at Shamkir and Ganja battles the Russians crushed the Iranian army. After Ganja battle Iranian army could not fight any more. At the end of 1826, Iranian soldiers had left all of North Azerbaijan lands, excluding the Talysh Khanate. [61]

Russian troops have not yet seize the initiative in the war, but the emperor Nicholas the I (1825-1855) commanded the Russian troops to occupy Iravan. The decree dated August 1, 1826 the emperor sent to general Yermolov was written: "Immediately march on leader of Iravan. I expect you to reply: There is no more leader by the help of God and Iravan province completely occupied. - You and the Russian army of 15 thousand people was enough for victory" [62] But as Yermolov directed all the attention on quelling the anti-Russian rebels in regions of northern Azerbaijan the march of the Russian troops on Iravan was postponed.

In March 1827, the chief commander of the Russian army in the Caucasus general A.P. Yermolov was substituted by general I.F. Paskevich (1827-1831). [63] On 20th of April, 1827 Russian troops seizing Bridge of Khudafarin have moved on Iravan khanate. Russian troops under the command of General Benkendorf, accompanied by the Armenian Archbishop Nerses Ashtarakets passing through Borchaly moved in the direction of Iravan. Benkendorf who seized Echmiadzin monastery on April 13, failed in an attempt to catch Sardarabad. On April 27, Russian troops surrounded the Iravan fortress. In early June, General Paskevich also came in front of the fortress. To deliver on The demand of Benkendorf on to deliver the fortress was rejected by Hasan khan, the

brother of Huseyngulu khan.Paskevich, who saw that blockade is useless, had to stop the blockade on June 23.

On June 26, 1827 Nakhchivan, on July 7 Abbasabad was occupied by Russian troops.Abbas Mirza's resistance gave no result.On July 19, 1827-A.S.Griboyedov, came Mirza Abbas's camp together with A.Bkikhanov and though they proposed to begin negotiation under the condition that Nakhchivan be given to them and the compensation be paid, but the agreement has not been reached.

In order to enforce The Tehran government to peace I.F.Paskevich first of all decided to invade Tabriz city which was considered the ammunition of Iran army. However, to leave behind the Iravan fortress, where the great power of the enemy was concentrateddemanded greater risk.Therefore, I.F.Paskevich initially decided to seize Iravan.[64]

After a week-long siege, On September 20, 1827 four days after occupation of Sardarabad the Russian troops surrounded Iravan. As before, Paskevich required to deliver the Iravan fortress but was rejected by Hasan Khan.The city was shelled by constant artillery fire. More than thouthand shells from 40 ballistic gun dropped on the fortress .V.Potto writes so about the destroys committed by the Russian artillery in Iravan city : "It seems to me that what siege artillery did during 4 days is impossible to do in 4 centuries."[65]

On October 1, 1827 Armenians who were inside the castle created contact with invaders and revolted and demanded that Hassan khan to surrender fortress to the Russians.Despite all the efforts of khan , Armenians opened the

North door of the fortress for the enemy.[66]According to Armenian historian V.Parsamyan,when Hasan Khan left the fortress the Armenians opened the gates of the castle for the Russian troops.[67]Thus, on October 1, 1827, and the city of Iravan and its fortress was occupied by the Russian troops.All garrison of the castle including Hasan khan were captured.Thus, Iravan Khanate collapsed.

The acquisition of Iravan has created great enthusiasm in Russia.Emperor Nicholai the first returned to St. Petersburg from Riga in a hurry on haring this news.The solemn ceremonies were held. on November 8 on the occasion of the acquisition of Iravan a prayer ceremony was held at the Winter Palace in the presence of the emperor and his family members .On this occasion of occupation, general I.F.Paskevich was introduced to the titles "count" ,"Iravanski" and received 1 million rubles as award. At the same time he was awarded with the order of George of 2nd degree and many other awards and medals.[68]All these show that the Iravan khanate was the territory of great and special importance for the Russian empire.

A few days after the occupation of Iravan, on October 6, 1827, by the order of the general I.Paskevich, the commander of Russian troops in the Caucasus "interim management" was created in Iravan.General Krasovski, the commander of the local army was appointed as the chief of the department, comandant of the Iravan fortress general Borodin and the Armenian Patriarch Nerses Ashtarakes were appointed as members of the administration.Interim government was instructed to take full power in Iravan region, carry out man-

agement, establish law and order in the region, to solve the demand and supply issues of the Russian army as the main task.[69]

At the same time, to ensure security on the territory of the Iravan khanate, to organize the infantry and cavalry guard groups consisting of Armenian population were in charge of the Interim administration.[70]Despite azerbaijanies formed an absolute majority of the population on the territory of the Iravan khanate Interim government had chosen just Armenians for representing Azerbaijanies in the region , for providing their security and guard services and layed the foundation of the armenization of the Iravan region.

On October 2 Marand , on October 13 Tabriz was captured by Russian soldiers after Iravan. As Peace talks between Russia and Iran which began inDehgargan (6 November, 1827 - 7 January 1828) gave no result. Russian troops rush on Urmiya on January 28, and then on Ardabil on February 8 and occupied these territories.The new attack of the Russian troops caused panic among Iran's ruling circles.The British ambassador Makdonald was afraid that Iran will be totally destroyed and acted as a mediator between the belligerents.On February 6 in the village Turkmanchay near Tabriz the peace talks between Ivan Paskevich and Mirza Abbas were resumed.[71]Iran was forced to accept the items put forward by Russia. In 1828, at the night from 9th to 10th of February Turkmanchay peace treaty was signed between Russia and Iran.[72]According to the third Article of the Treaty of Turkmanchaythe khanates of Iravan and Nakhchivan was annexed to Russia.

A little later the contract was signed - in 1828, on March 21 Emperor of Russia Nicholai the first signed a decree according to which Irterim management has been canceled and on the territory of Iravan and Nakhchivan khanates was established the interim administrative management named "Armenian province".[73] The chief commander of the local armed forces, Major-General Alexander Chavchavadze was appointed as the chief of the province. Creation of the "Armenian province" on the territory of Nakhcivan and Iravan khanates was the most important step for the establishment of the Armenian state on the Azerbaijan lands.

The draft guidelines for the management of the Armenian province was prepared. The project demanded implementation of the certain liberalism towards the Armenian population.The project, in general, aimed to contribute to strengthening of the Russian government in the province, and to ensure the process of armenianization in the region.[74]

Turkmenchay and Edirne contractsthe Russian government began the process of transferring Armenian people from Iran and the Ottoman empire to the territory of the South Caucasus.Beginning from February 26 till June 11 , 1828, within three months and half 8249 armenian families, on other word , at least 40 thousand Armenians were transferred from Iran to North Azerbaijan - Iravan, Nakhchivan and Garabakh khanates.A bit later, more than 90 thousand Armenians were moved from the territory of the Ottoman Empire to the South Caucasus and were placed on the territory of above-mentioned khanates.[75]

Before the transferring, the territory which later was called "Armenian province" had the population of 107224 people, 76.24% of which were the Azerbaijanis and 23.45% were accounted for Armenians.[76] 75.6% of the population of Iravan accounting 9700 people were the Azerbaijanis, 24.4% were the Armenians. Such prevalence of Azerbaijanis in ethnic composition of the region proves undeniable historical fact that these territories historically belonged to Azerbaijan. The ethnic composition of the population changed dramatically after the resettlement. As the result of the transferring

the number of the population in Iravan reached 11463 people. As its result, the number of Azerbaijanis came down till 64%, while the number of Armenians went up 36%.[77]

Thus, during the occupation of Northern Azerbaijan Russia in return for their service in the Russian tsarist army shared the lands on the occupied territories of Azerbaijan - Nakhchivan and Iravan khanates which were called "Iravan province". Thus, the Armenians under the patronage and with the help of Tsarist Russia have created their territorial base in the South Caucasus.

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